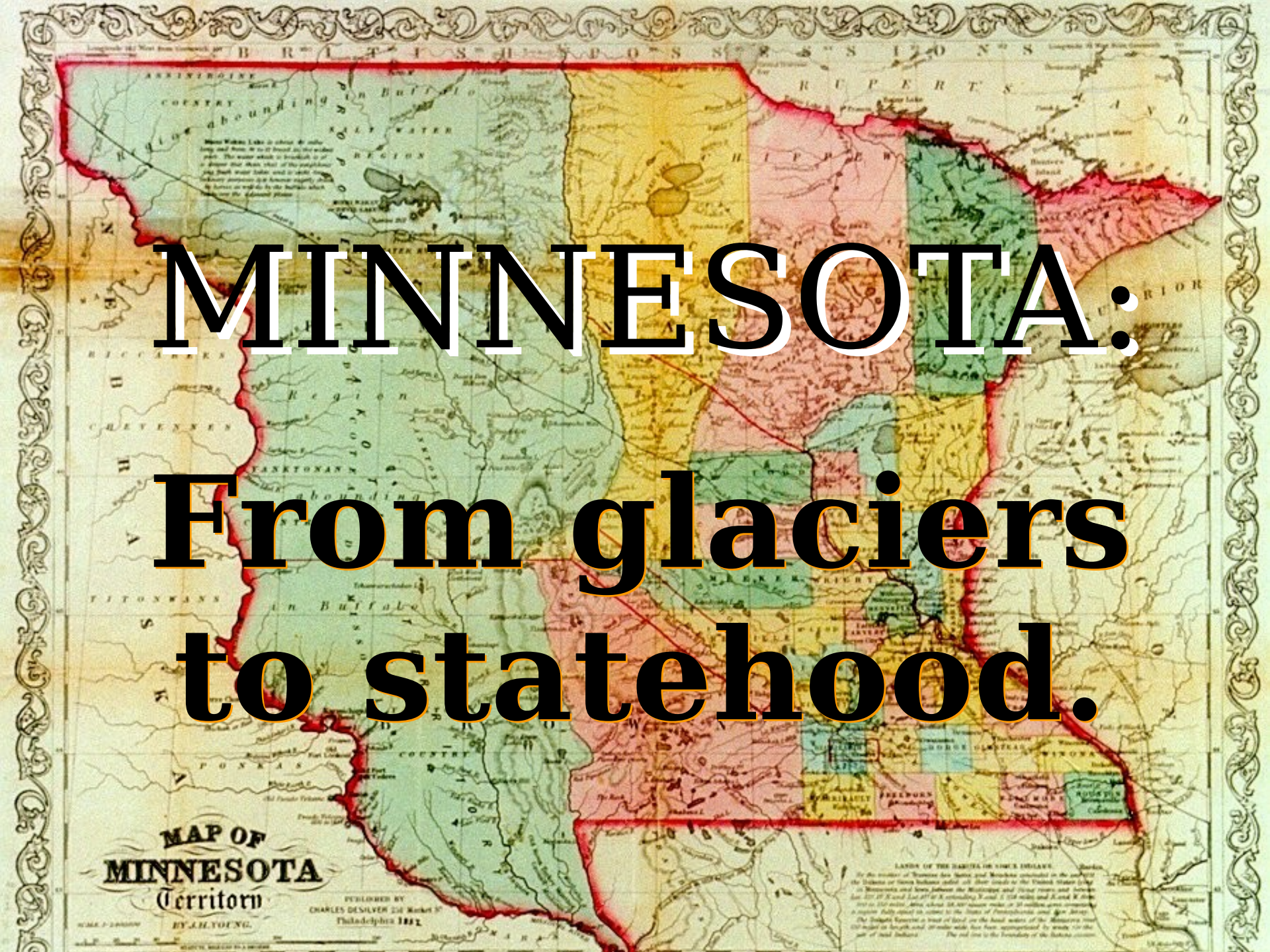


MINNESOTA:

From glaciers to statehood.

Minnesota in the last ice age

- Lake Agassiz covered much of Minnesota
- Formed 11,000 - 9,000 years ago
- Larger than California

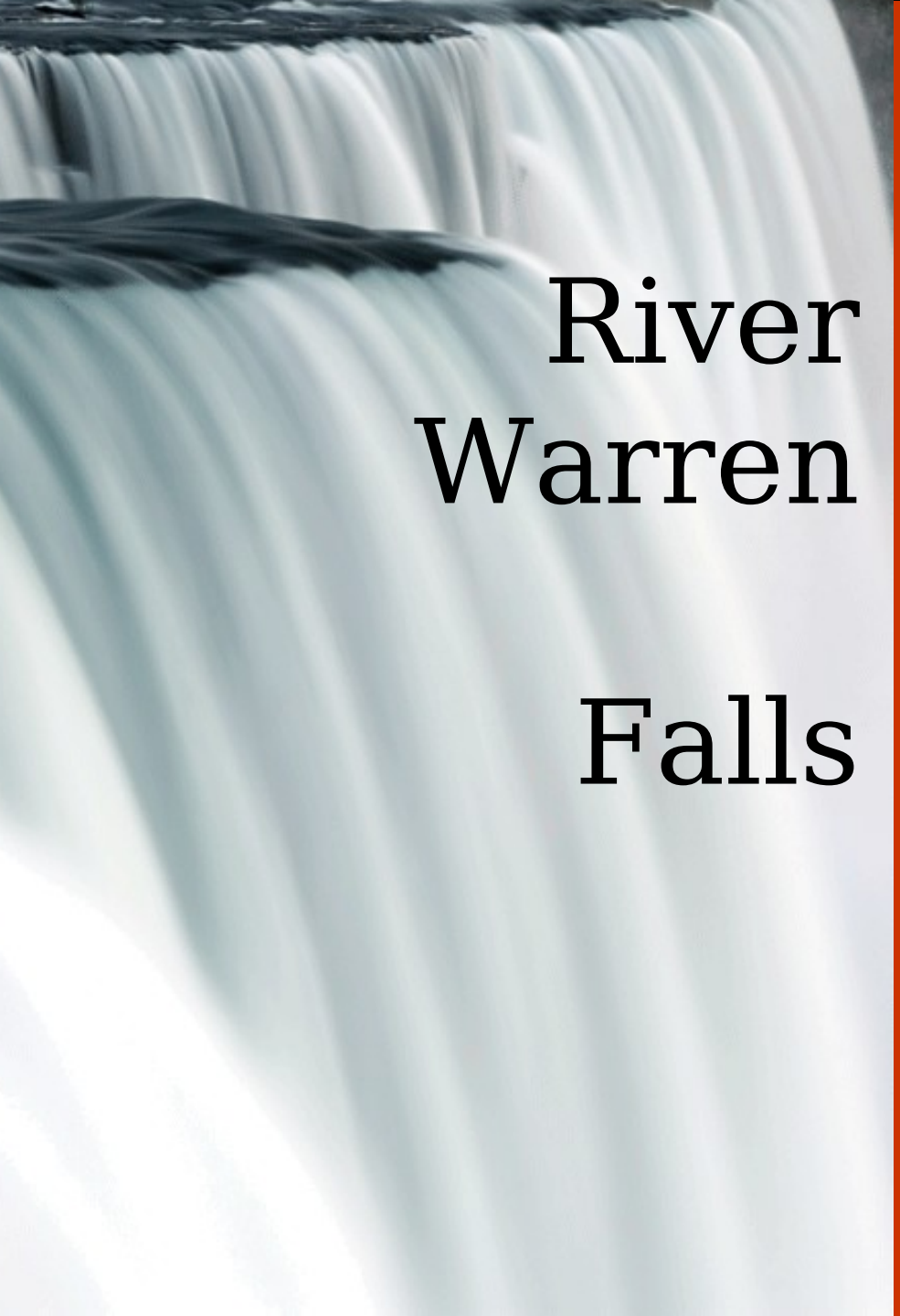
MAP SHOWING THE AREAS OF LAKE AGASSIZ AND OF THE UPPER LAURENTIAN LAKES.

Scale, about 165 miles to an inch.

Lake Agassiz and associated Glacial Lakes | Glacial Striæ | Terminal Moraines

Glacial River Warren

- Drained Lake Agassiz
- Followed course of current Minnesota River
- Carved the vast Minnesota River Valley



River Warren Falls

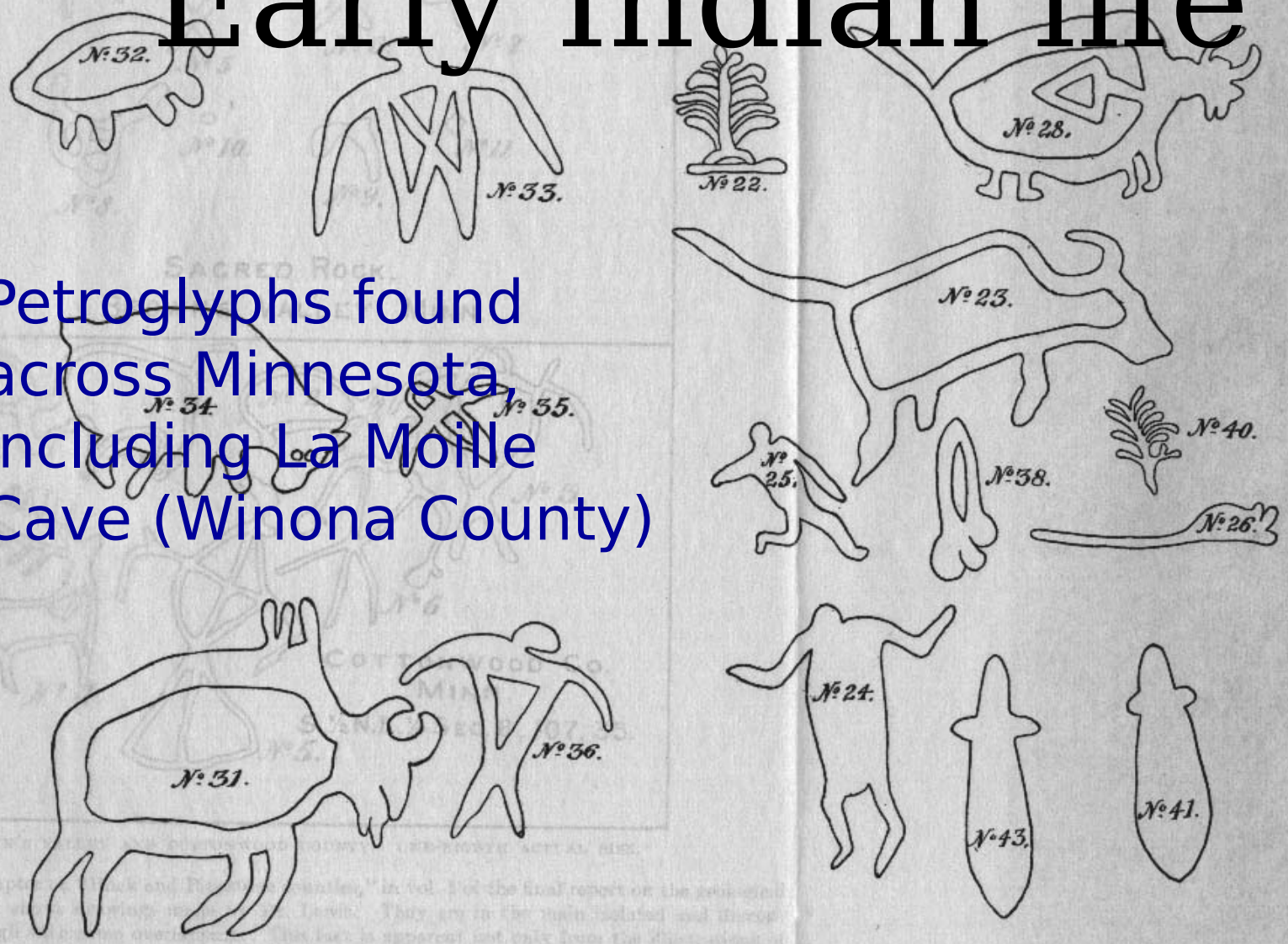
- Located in St. Paul
- 10X wider than Niagara > ½ mile
- From Cathedral to Dayton’s Bluff
- 175 feet high
- Receded upriver to present day St. Anthony Falls

Humans come to Minnesota

- Receding glaciers bring back prairies, forests – and hunters
- Oldest example is “Brown’s Valley Man”, discovered in 1933 and believed to be 8,900 years old
- “Minnesota Woman” (right) discovered in 1938 near Pelican Rapids, about 7,800 – 8,000 years old
- Both sets of remains have been repatriated with Dakota tribes and have been reburied

Early Indian life

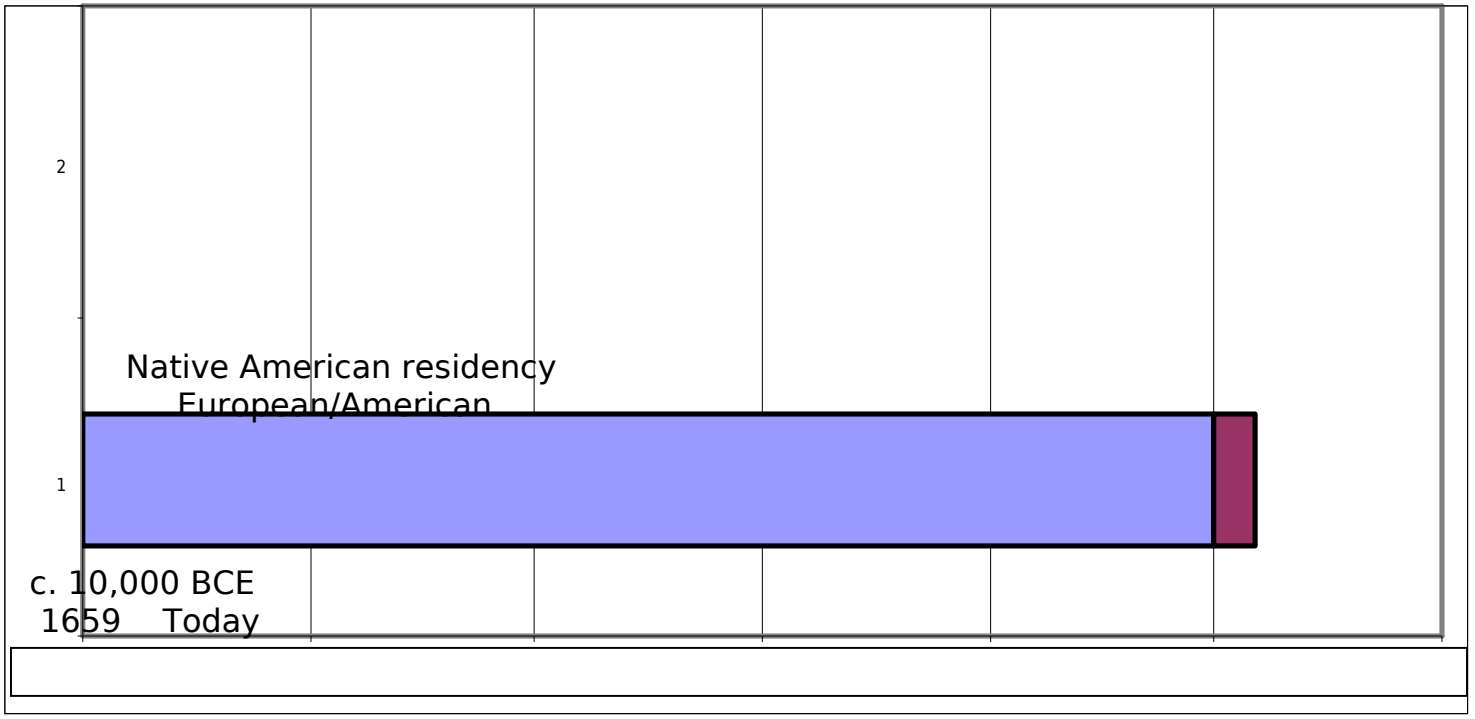
- Petroglyphs found across Minnesota, including La Moille Cave (Winona County)



Before the Europeans

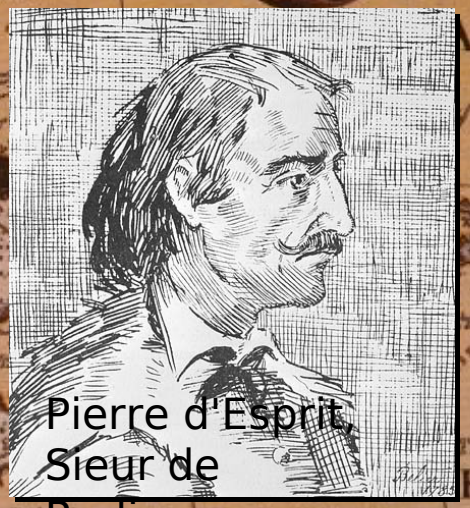
- Dakota people inhabited area for many years
- Ojibwe people moved in from east and north in 1700s, pushed by white settlement
- Frequent conflict between groups
- Battle of Kathio near Lake Mille Lacs in 1745 pushed Dakota to the south and west.

Comparing native to European habitation



c.1660: French explorations

- Medard Chouart and Pierre d'Esprit, better known as the **Sieur des Groseilliers** (Chouart) and **Sieur de Radisson**, (d'Esprit) get to Knife Lake near Mora, conduct small expeditions from there.



Pierre d'Esprit, Sieur de Radisson

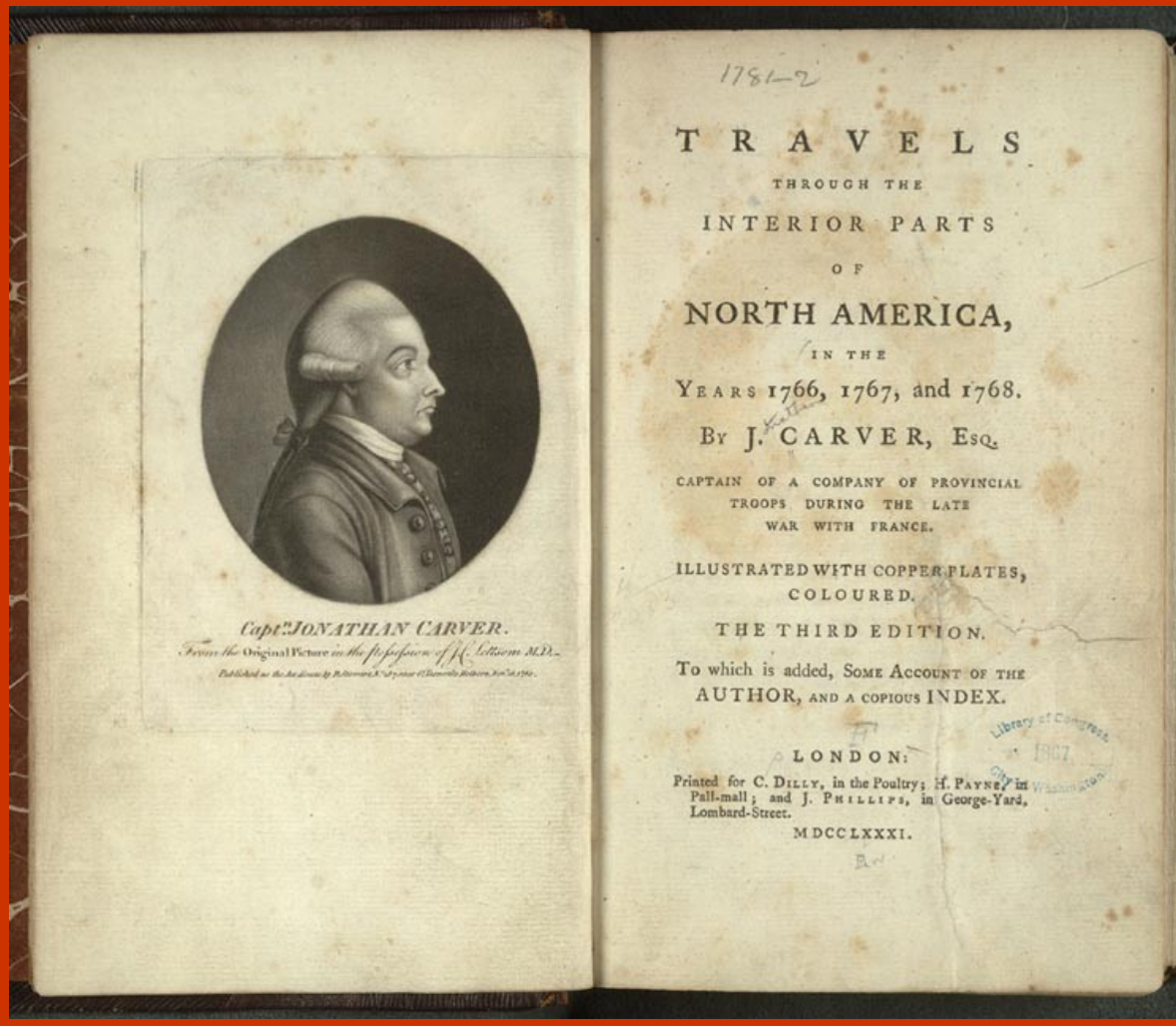
Minnesota's place in New France 1681

Highlights of New France

- 1673: Marquette and Joliet reach Mississippi River at confluence of Wisconsin River, head south
- 1679 Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Du Luth, claims Mille Lacs area for France
- 1680 Michael Accualt, Picard du Gay & Louis Hennepin becomes the first Europeans to arrive at St. Anthony Falls.
- Except for trading posts and mission stations –and these were gone by 1750 - no permanent settlements in MN
- Fur trading established between local tribes and voyageurs
- French dominion **east of the Mississippi** ended with the surrender of Montreal in the French/Indian War (1760)
- Area west of the Mississippi dealt to Spain in secret Franco-Spanish Treaty in 1762

Under British Rule

- 1766- Jonathan Carver explores Minnesota, later pens exaggerated - but much read book about upper Mississippi region.
- Spurs interest in search for the “Northwest Passage”
- Northwest Company formed in Montreal, virtually monopolizes the fur trade
- Fur posts established at Fond du Lac, Lake Sandy and Leech Lake
- Legally, British rule ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, but forts flew British flag for nearly 30 more years
- Even Virginia laid claim of NW land including Minnesota as part of “County of Augusta” until 1784



Capt.n JONATHAN CARVER.

1781-2

TRAVELS

THROUGH THE

INTERIOR PARTS

OF

NORTH AMERICA,

IN THE

YEARS 1766, 1767, and 1768.

BY J. CARVER, ESQ.

CAPTAIN OF A COMPANY OF PROVINCIAL TROOPS DURING THE LATE WAR WITH FRANCE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH COPPER PLATES, COLOURED.

THE THIRD EDITION.

To which is added, SOME ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR, AND A COPIOUS INDEX.

LONDON:

Printed for C. DILLY, in the Poultry; H. PAYNE, in Pall-mall; and J. PHILLIPS, in George-Yard, Lombard-Street.

MDCCLXXXI.

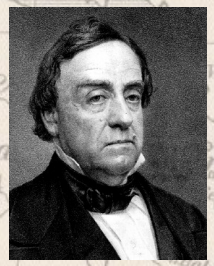
Western MN joins America

- Spain cedes *La Louisiane* back to French in 1800
- In 1803, Louisiana is purchased by Jefferson for $15 million

Early American explorations

- 1805: Lt. Zebulon Pike, 26 years old, leads expedition up Mississippi as far as Leech Lake, which he believed to be the source of the Mississippi
- Orders the shooting down the British Union Jack which had still been flying over the trading post there
- Negotiates land cessation with band of Dakota for St. Anthony Falls and Fort Snelling area
- Expedition not followed up, area reverted to British domination until 1815, when the Treaty of Ghent ended of the War of 1812

Early American explorations



- 1820: Michigan Territory Governor **Lewis Cass** takes expedition to Cass Lake.

- 1823: Major **Steven Long** explores Minnesota and Red Rivers, notes continental divide between Lakes Big Stone and Traverse.

- 1832: **Henry Schoolcraft** is led by Ojibwe **Ozawindib**, (Yellow Head) to true source of Mississippi, which Schoolcraft names “Itasca.”

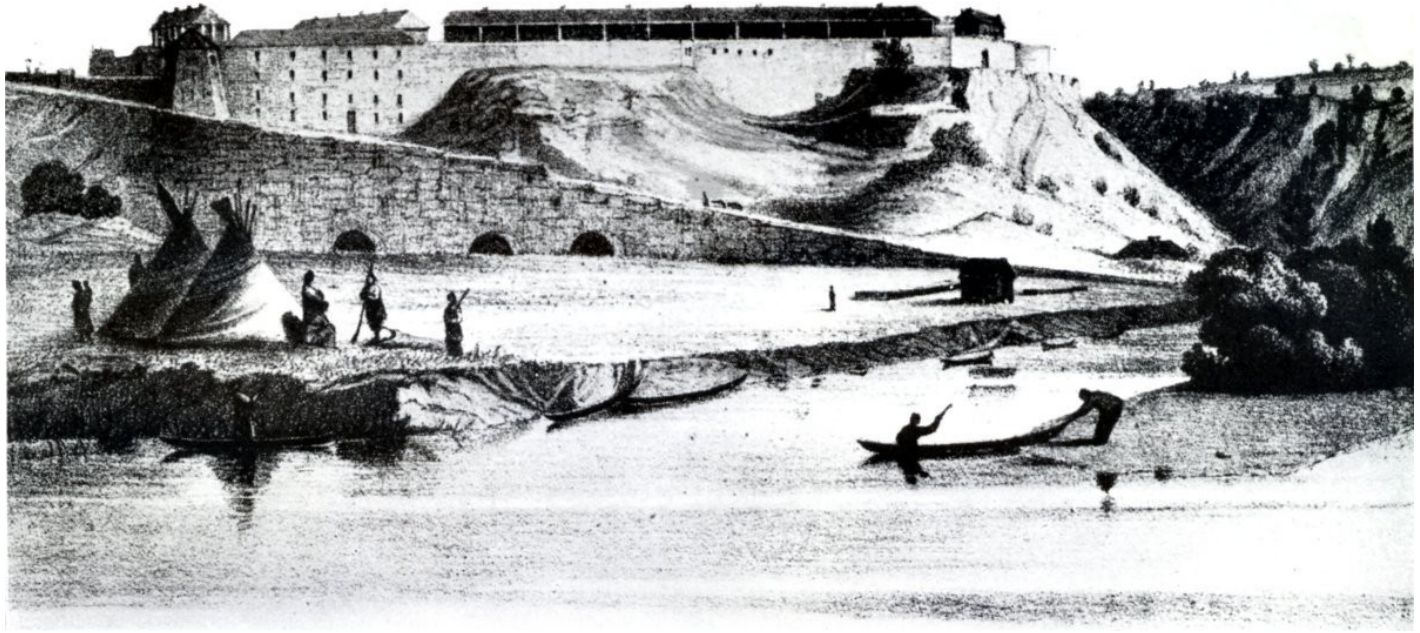
- 1836: **Joseph Nicolas Nicollet** further explores and extensively maps the region

The fur trade

- Virtually the only form of commerce in MN for 175 years
- Traded goods, blankets, cloth, beads, ribbons, thimbles, ear bobs, broaches, tobacco, kettles, guns, lead, gunpowder, knives, traps – and liquor and guns – to Indians for furs.
- Hudson's Bay Company controlled the drainage area of Hudson's Bay, one of the world's fir corporations (1670)
- American Fur Company, found by John Jacob Astor in 1809, came to monopolize fur trade in US.
  - *Mendota post run by H.H. Sibley, who was to become Minnesota's first Governor*
- Many famous Minnesota names involved as agents, traders, or voyageurs: Sibley, Faribault, Renville, McLeod, Kittson

Fort Snelling

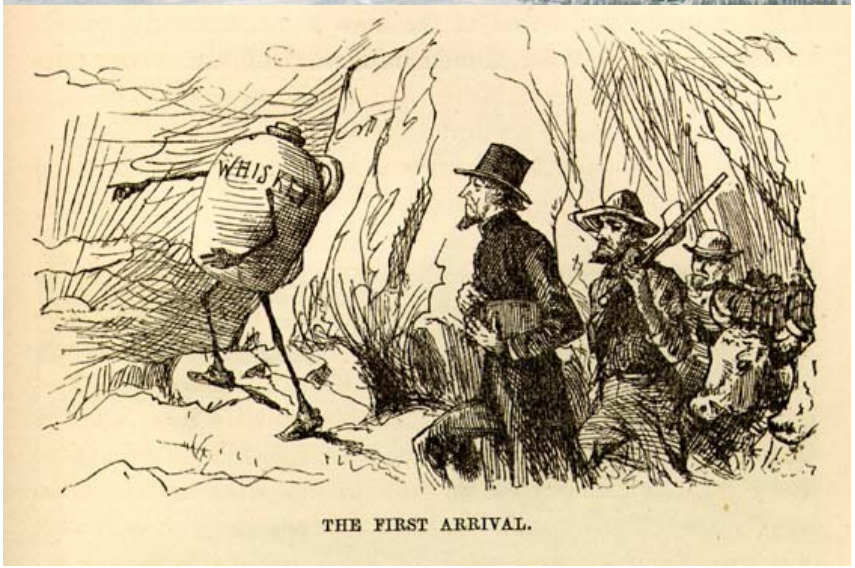
- Built as “Fort St. Anthony” from 1819-1825 on land purchased by Zebulon Pike
- Renamed Fort Snelling in honor of Josiah Snelling
- The center of what could be considered “government” in Minnesota until 1849
- With removal of Native Americans from much of Minnesota, its 40,000 acre reservation is reduced and opened up for settlement between in 1851 and 1871



Beginnings of white settlement

- Beginning in 1826, mainly Swiss members of the flagging Selkirk colony in Manitoba drift south along the Red River Valley, making their way along trade routes to Fort Snelling, Mendota and other trading posts and settlements
- Settlements established where economic opportunity existed, like St Anthony Falls, river ports for lumber and fur trading posts, etc.
- Whiskey merchants operated on east bank of Mississippi to avoid jurisdiction of Fort Snelling reservation established by Pike's treaty.
- Among these was Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, who operated in what is now downtown St. Paul.

Selkirk Settlement along Red River

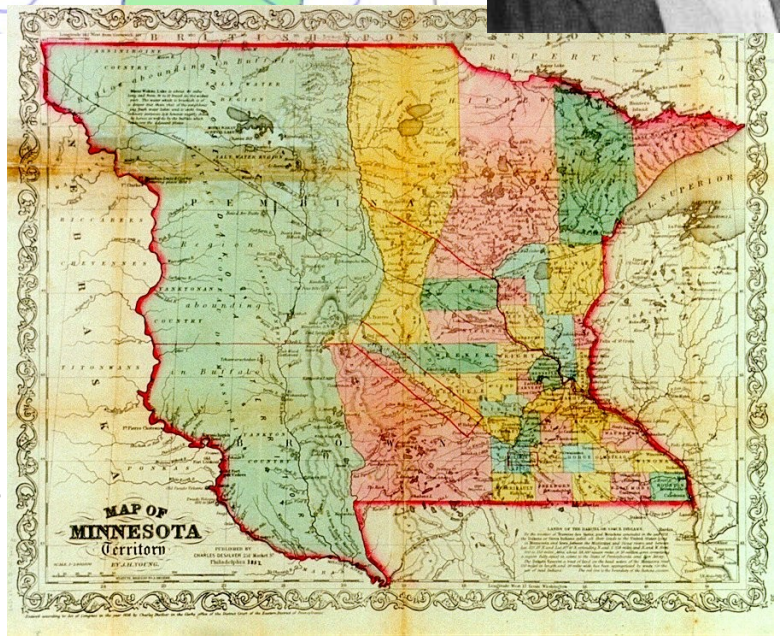


THE FIRST ARRIVAL.

From *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain

Minnesota becomes a territory

- Beginning in 1846, bills and amendments in Congress to establish “Minasota”, “Itaska” and “Minesota” fail to get floor action
- When Wisconsin becomes a state in 1848, it left a vestige of the old Wisconsin Territory between the St. Croix and the Mississippi Rivers. Henry Sibley was elected as the congressional delegate for this area, and with the help of Senator Steven Douglas, helps pass the “Organic Act of Minnesota” on March 3, 1849.

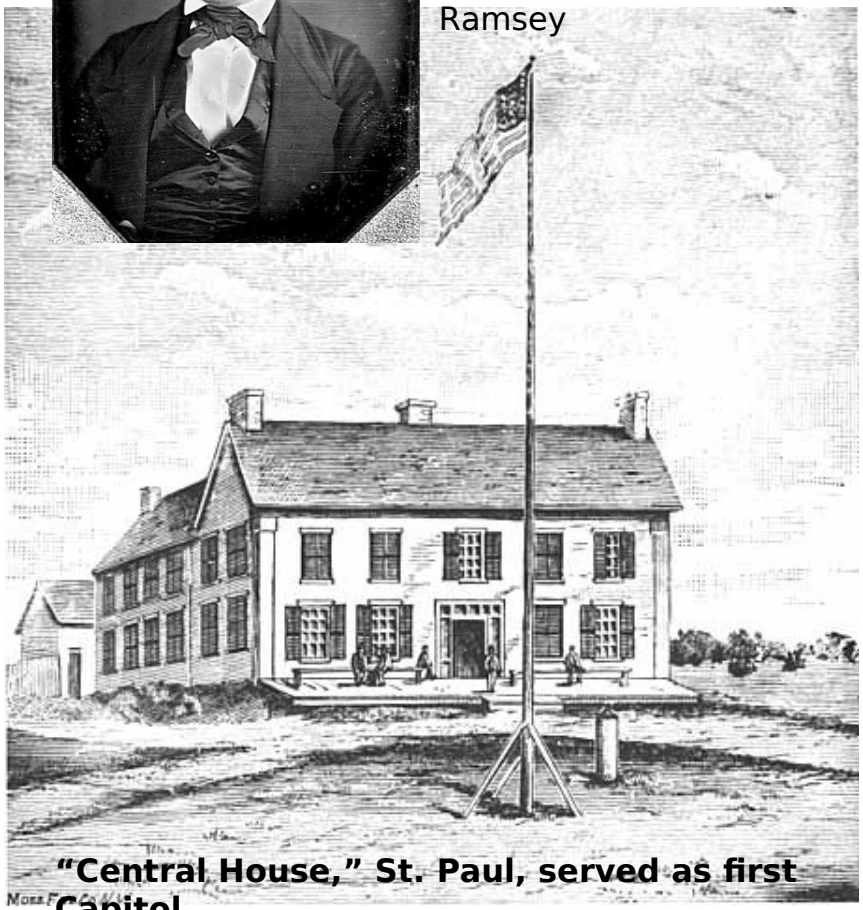


PEMBINA
ITASCA
MAHKAHTA
WAHNAHTA
DAHKOTAH
WABASHAW
IOWA
WISCONSIN
BENTON
RAMSEY
WASHINGTON
Lake of the Woods
Rainy R.
Rainy L.
Hunter Island
Red L.
Devil's L.
Red River of the North
Itasca L.
LAKE SUPERIOR
St. Louis R.
Missouri River
Cheyenne R.
St. Croix R.
Mississippi
Minnesota River
L. Pepin
James R.
Sioux R.
Des Moines R.
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
showing the
ORIGINAL COUNTIES
1849-1851
0 25 50 100 150
SCALE OF MILES

Territorial government

- The Enabling Act established St. Paul as capital, even though Sen. Steven Douglas preferred Mendota, Sibley's home.
- President Taylor nominates three candidates for Territorial Governor, the first was rejected by the Senate, the second declined the job, the third, 34-year old Alexander Ramsey of Pennsylvania, is ratified.
- Minnesota's white population was about 6,000, compared to about 25,000 Indians.

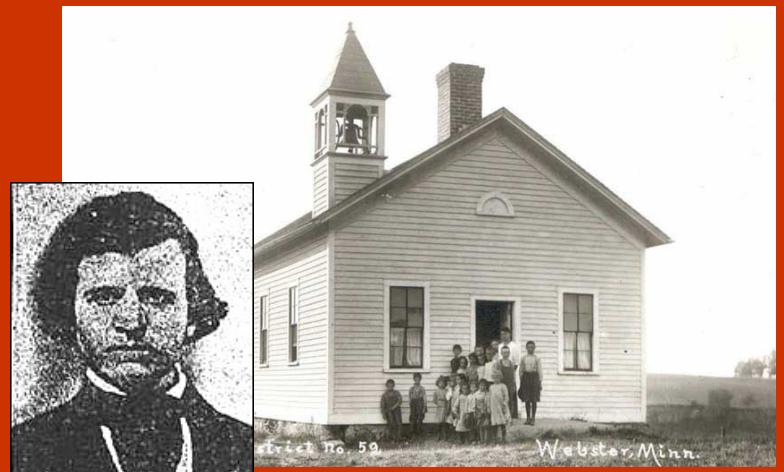
Alexander Ramsey

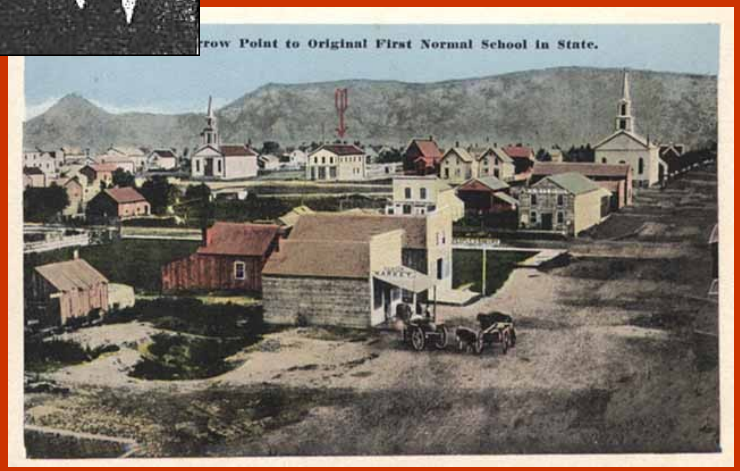


"Central House," St. Paul, served as first Capitol

Priority #1: Public Education

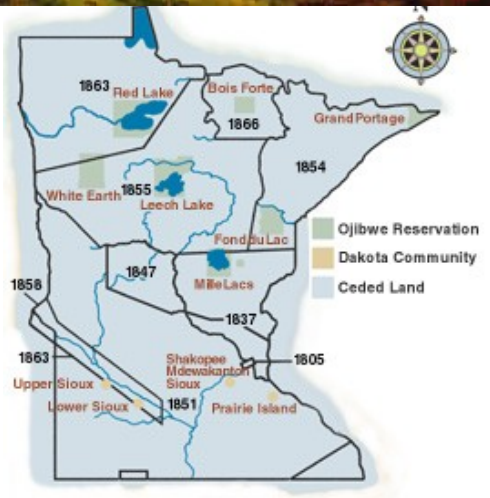
- Organic act sets aside 2 sections in each township for the benefit of public education – most other states had only one.
- Among the first bills passed by the Territorial Legislature is by Martin McLeod: “An Act to establish and maintain Common Schools for the education of all the children and youth of the Territory."
- A state tax was authorized which could be supplemented by a tax to be voted in each school district
- Public schools were opened to all persons between the ages of four and twenty-one years.





Land Grab

- At Traverse des Sioux in 1851, the Dakota ceded 21 million acres for about 7.5 cents an acre. It set up reservations on both the north and south sides of the Minnesota River.
- The U.S. government only promised to pay interest - 5% for 50 years -- to the Dakota.
- The U.S. Senate changed the treaties by leaving the Dakota only a small strip on the southern side of the Minnesota River. Congress required that the Dakota had to approve this change before paying cash and goods.



Settlers pour in

- Opening of Indian lands spurred settlement
- Land that was purchased for 7.5 cents per acre from Native Americans was sold to whites for $1.25 per acre
- Minnesota’s population, only about 32,000 in 1854 mushroomed to 150,000 by 1857
- Winona went from 0 to 3000 between the years 1851 to 1857.
- Land speculation replaces fur trading as the largest economic activity, but opportunities in the lumbering business also drew many from new England states, especially Maine

Winona in 1856

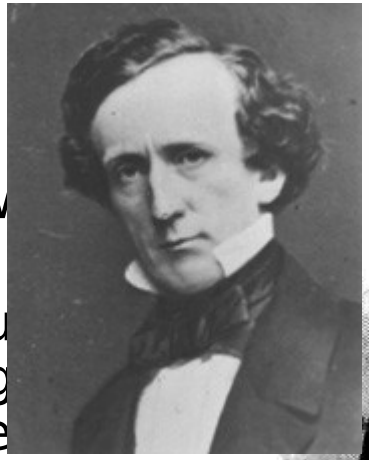
MN's Territorial/State Seal

A vestige of settlers' attitudes towards Original Americans

- Territorial Gov. Ramsey suggests seal, a sunburst with the motto "Liberty, Law, Religion, and Education," along with an Indian family welcoming a white man with a peace pipe. Legislature rejects idea.
- H.H. Sibley's idea prevails, with design based on soldier/artist Seth Eastman drawing - seal represents whites taking over the land from native people.
- Territorial seal motto is misspelled, setting sun and fleeing Indian reversed from intended design.
- When Minnesota becomes a state, Henry Sibley redesigns seal adding French motto *L'Etoile du Nord*
- Current seal, adopted in 1983, attempts to soften image of fleeing Indian

The push for statehood

- Minnesotans were generally content remaining a territory, except:
  - A territory could not borrow money for improvements
  - Lack of vote in Congress ou Minnesota at a disadvantag in lobbying for transcontine railroad connections, or for federal
    railroad land grants



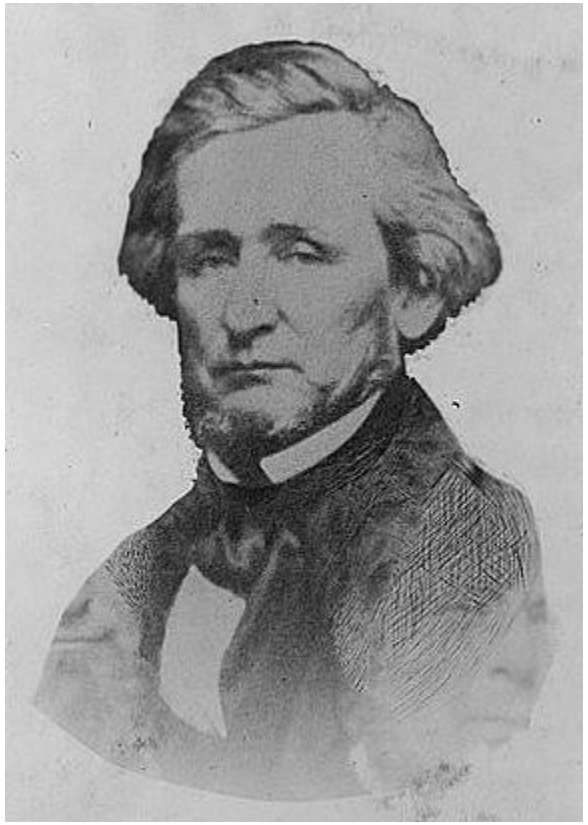
Henry Mower Rice

WILLIS ARNOLD GORMAN.

- Territorial Governor Willis Gorman and Congressional Delegate Henry Mower Rice lead charge for statehood

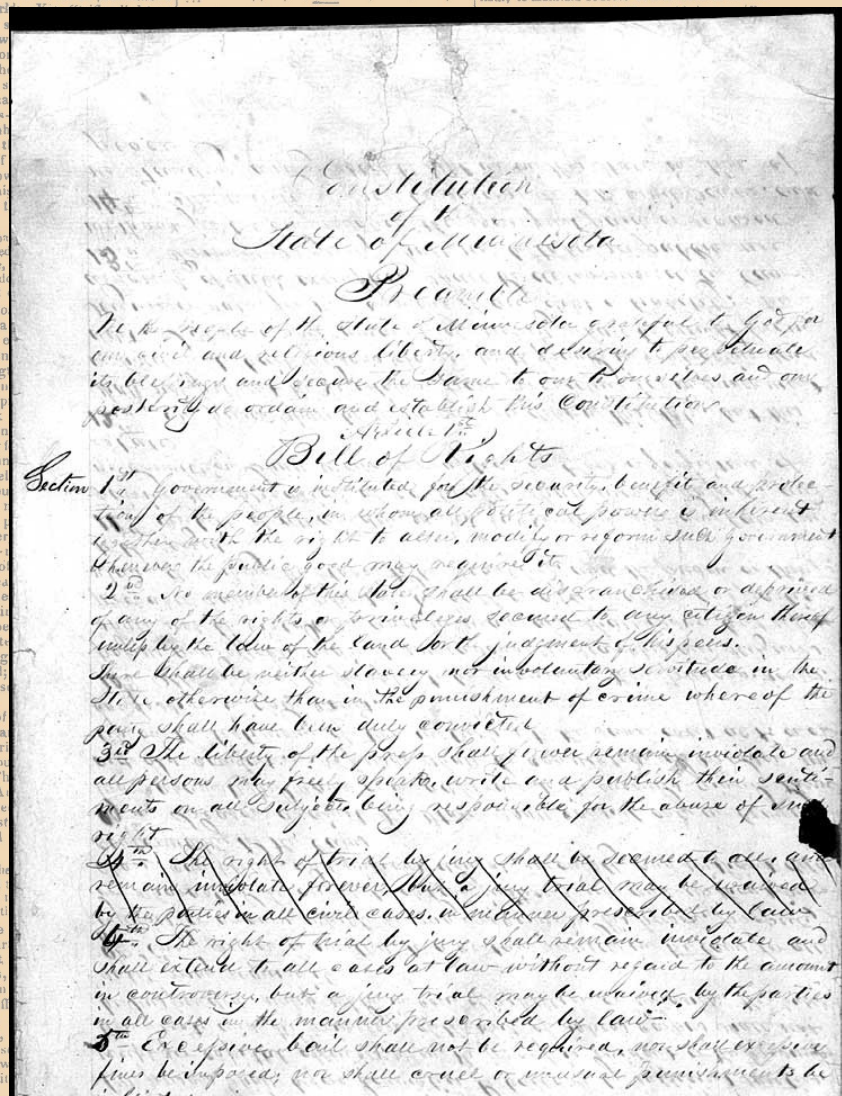
The statehood debate

- In Congress, enabling act to authorize the people of the territory to frame a state constitution to be submitted passes, but without votes from Southern senators.
- Senator John B. Thompson (Kentucky) says that Senators from the new state would be *“arrogant, assuming, pretentious, Free-Soil-ish, and Democratic, (coming in to destroy the equilibrium of the Senate.)”*



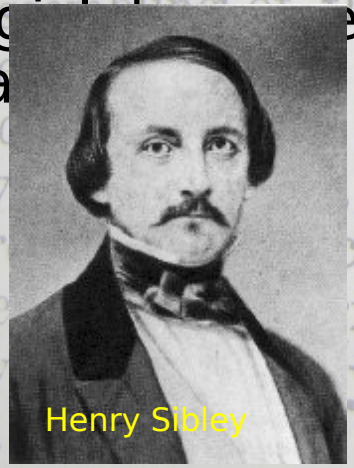
Partisanship roils state constitutional convention

- Constitutional convention meets July 1857
- Republicans and Democrats so divided that they formed two separate constitutional conventions and drafted two separate constitutions.
- Slavery debate a factor
- Differences worked out in a conference committee, but Republicans refuse to sign because it had Democratic signatures on it, and vice versa.
- Two copies are prepared for signatures, one white (Republicans) and the other blue.
- Minnesota voters vote to approve the constitution by a margin of 30,055 to 571

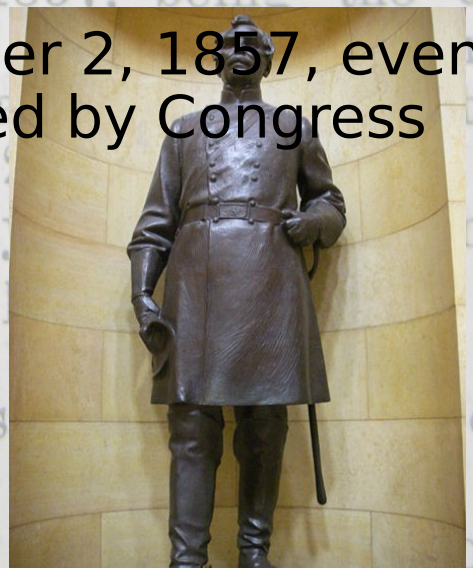


Minnesota jumps the gun…

- After the vote, Congress needed to ratify Minnesota's statehood, but Minnesota went ahead and elected state officers and a governor in October of 1857
- Henry Sibley narrowly defeats Alexander Ramsay (by 240 votes out of over 35,000 cast) and becomes the first State Governor
- Henry Rice and James Shields are chosen as US Senators
- Leg[illegible]eets on December 2, 1857, even though sta[illegible] not been ratified by Congress



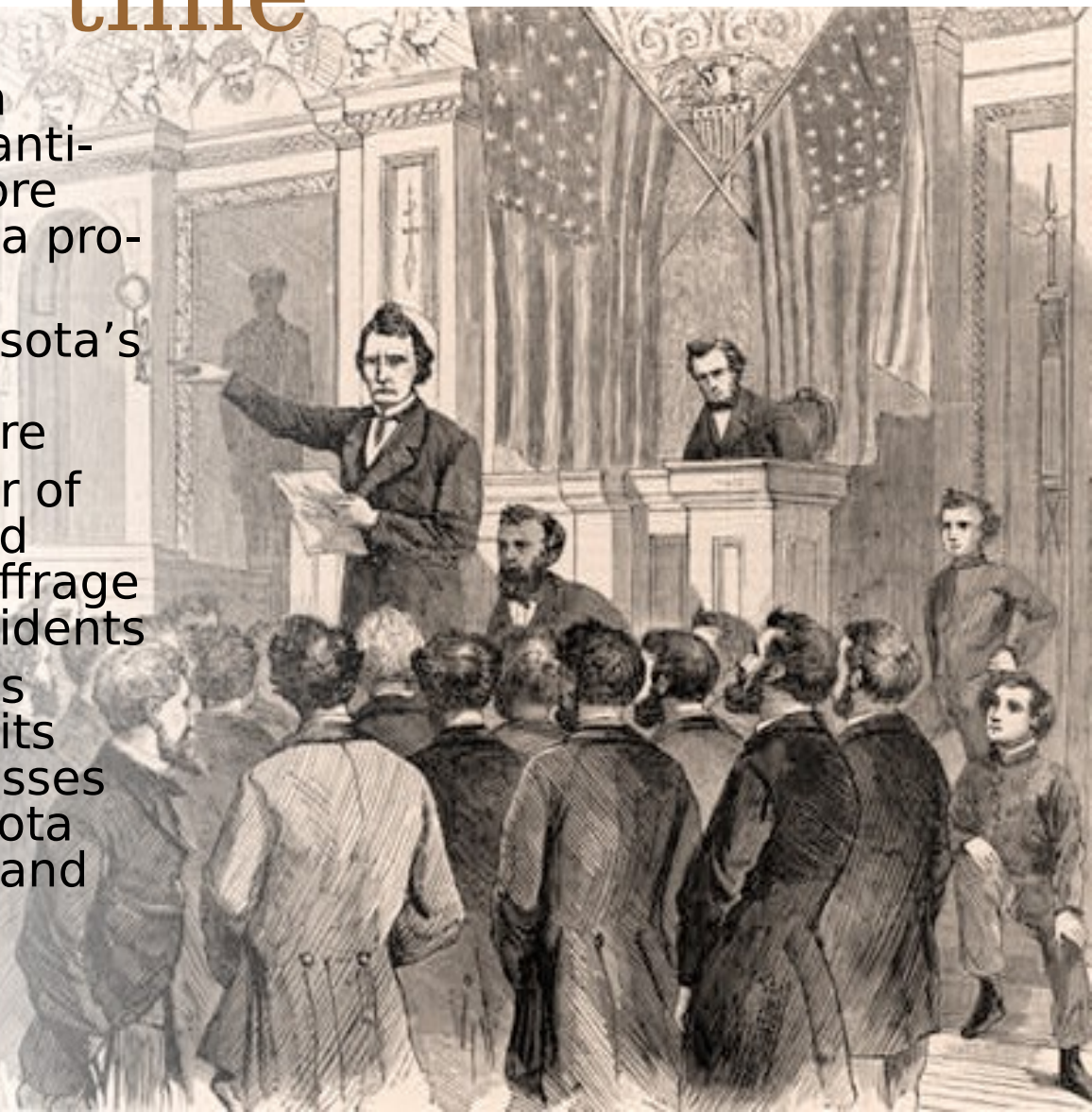
Henry Sibley



James Shields statue in Minnesota Capitol

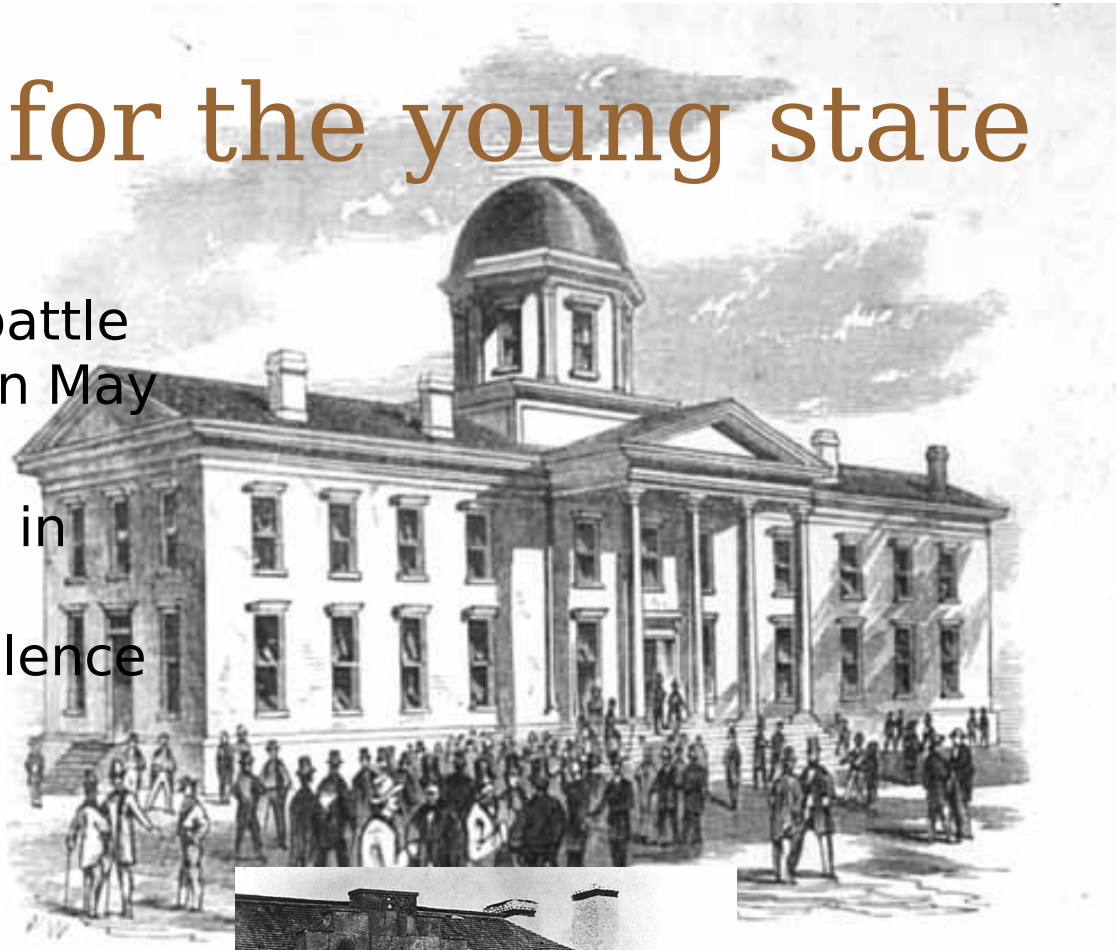
…but Congress takes its time

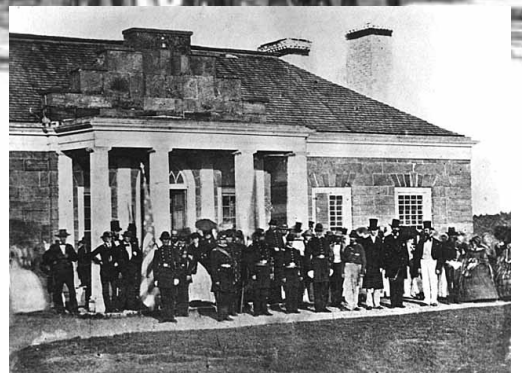
- Southern congressmen objected to admitting anti-slavery Minnesota before admitting Kansas with a pro-slavery constitution
- Also objected to Minnesota's "illegal" seating of a Governor and legislature
- Wrangling over number of US representatives, and objections to voting suffrage for non-naturalized residents
- On May 11, five months after Minnesota chose its Senators, US House passes Senate bill and Minnesota becomes a state. Rice and Shields are sworn in.



Challenges for the young state

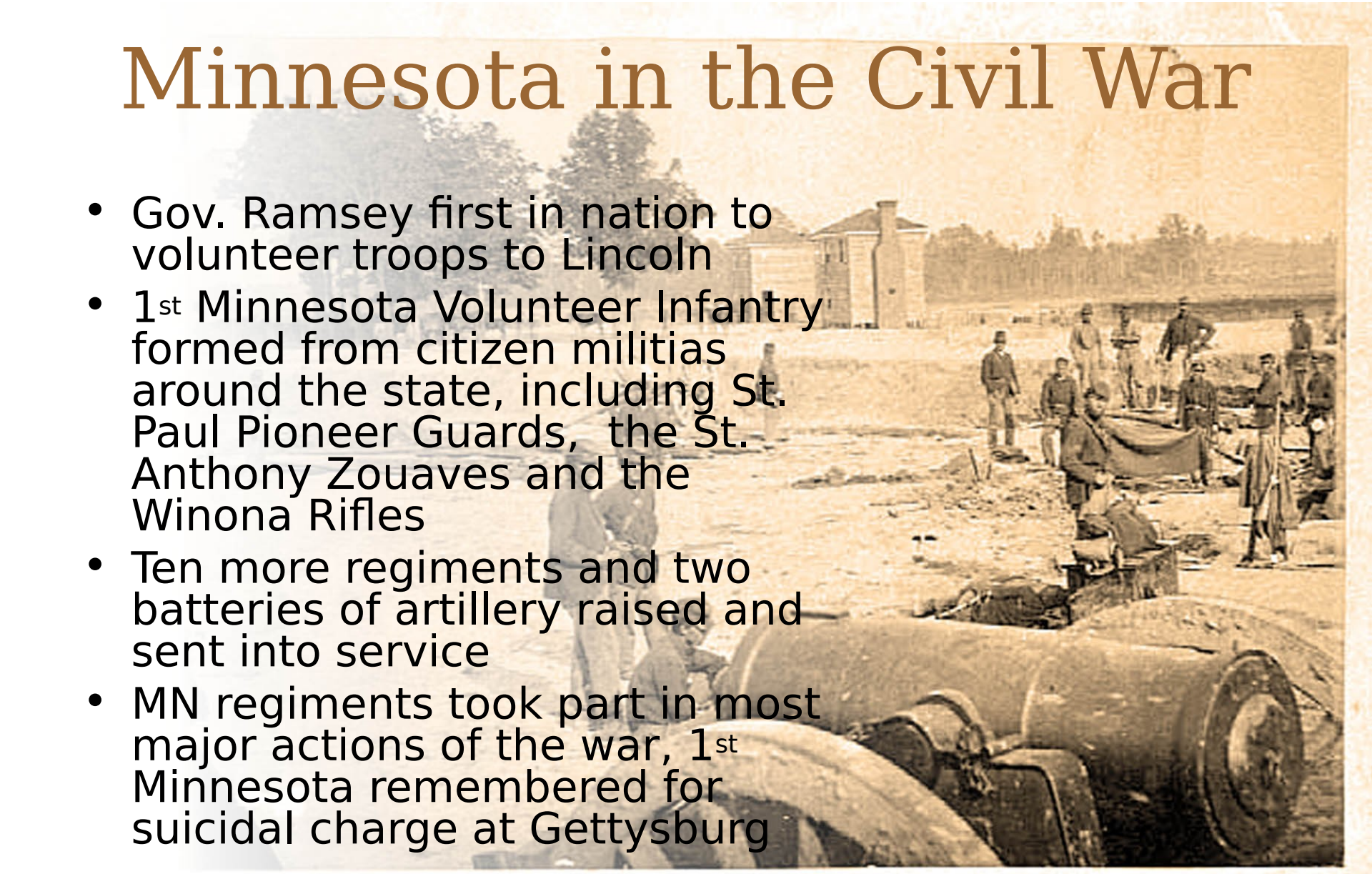
- Final Dakota-Ojibwe battle fought at Shakopee on May 27, 1858
- “Wright County War”, in which the militia was employed to quell violence there
- Sibley calls for reorganization of the state’s militia into volunteer companies of “able-bodied white male citizens” in communities around the state





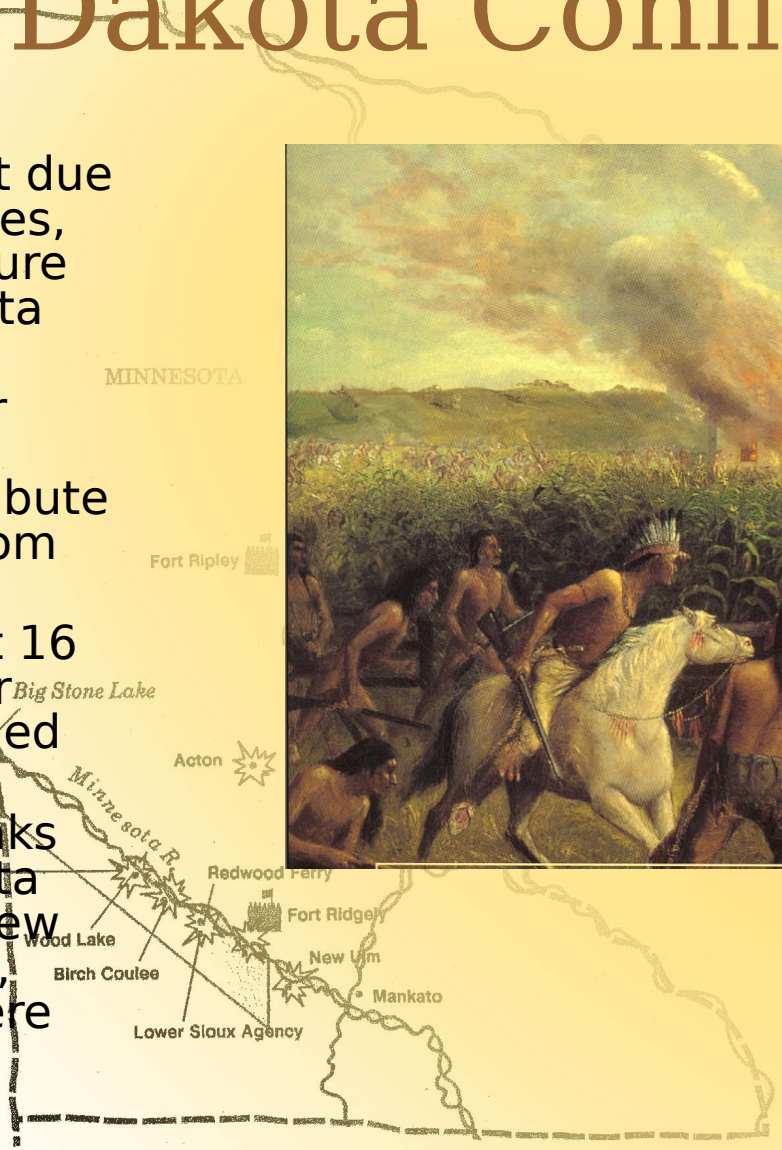
Minnesota in the Civil War

- Gov. Ramsey first in nation to volunteer troops to Lincoln
- 1st Minnesota Volunteer Infantry formed from citizen militias around the state, including St. Paul Pioneer Guards, the St. Anthony Zouaves and the Winona Rifles
- Ten more regiments and two batteries of artillery raised and sent into service
- MN regiments took part in most major actions of the war, 1st Minnesota remembered for suicidal charge at Gettysburg



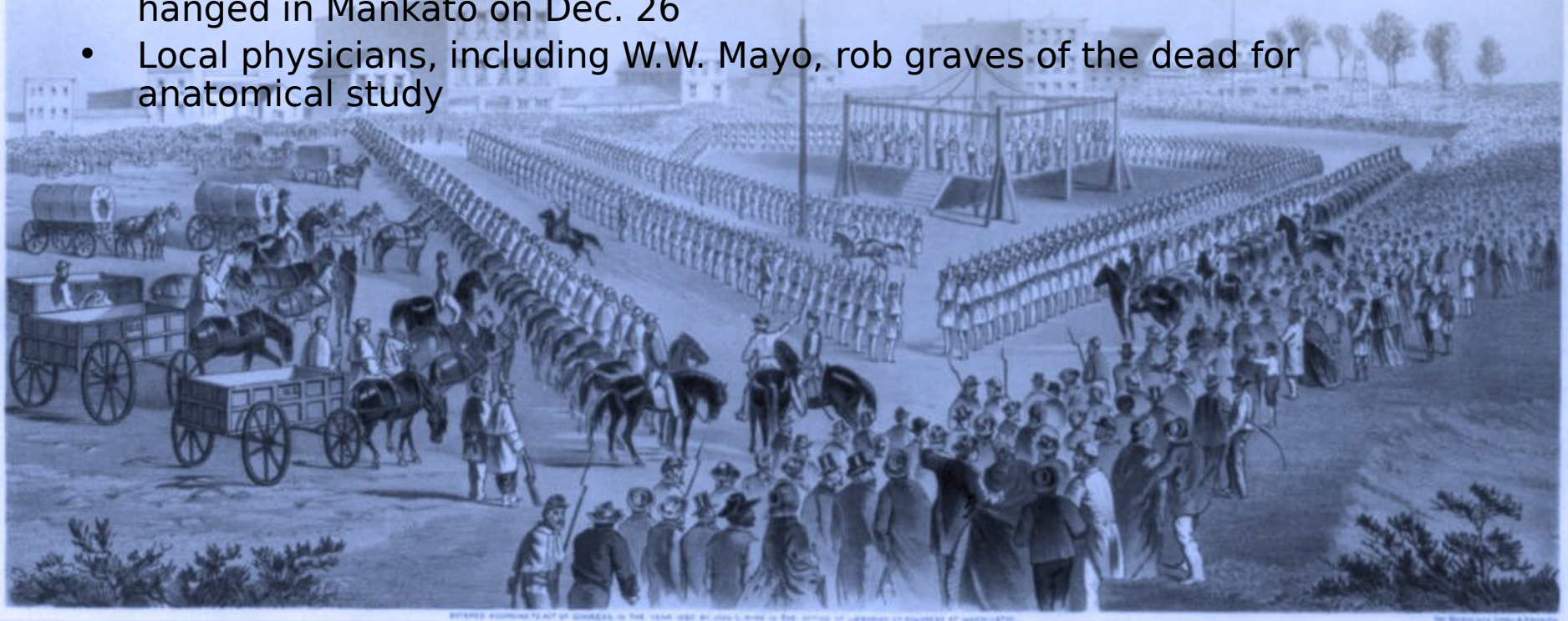
The 1862 Dakota Conflict

- Losing land, non-payment due to Civil War, broken treaties, famine following crop failure led to anger among Dakota
- Food was authorized, but Indian Agent, (and former State Senator) Thomas Galbraith refused to distribute food without payment from Dakota
- Fighting broke out August 16 near Acton MN, when four young Dakota hunters killed five settlers
- Wide spread fighting breaks out in the Upper Minnesota Valley, major battles at New Ulm, Lower Sioux Agency, Birch Coulee and elsewhere



Dakota Conflict ends

- Fighting ends with surrender of Dakota following Battle of Wood Lake
- “Trials” of Dakota, who were not allowed counsel, results in the condemnation of 303 prisoners
- President Lincoln personally reviews trial records, commutes sentences of 264.
- In the largest mass execution in American history, 38 Dakota were hanged in Mankato on Dec. 26
- Local physicians, including W.W. Mayo, rob graves of the dead for anatomical study



EXECUTION OF THE THIRTY-EIGHT SIOUX INDIANS

Dakota Conflict aftermath

- Reservations closed, Dakota driven out, $25 bounty put on the scalp of any Dakota found within borders of Minnesota
- Many Dakota families interred on Pike's Island below Fort Snelling, and in Rock Island, Illinois, then exiled to Nebraska.
- Hundreds die during internment and removal
- White settlers flee but are replaced in years following Civil War

Dakota prison camp below Fort Snelling

Homestead Act & railroads populate Greater Minnesota

- Signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, the Homestead Act gave an applicant free title to 160 acres of undeveloped land.
- Required three steps: file an application, improve the land, and file for deed of title.
- Nearly 10,000 homesteads were distributed in Minnesota, many to new immigrants from Scandinavia and Germany
- Railroads also sold great deals of land to immigrants
- By 1905, 22 counties had greater population then they do today

Den billigste og korteste Vei til
Amerika.
Indskrivning af Emigranter til alle Steder i de Forenede Stater i Amerika og Canada
L. A. Lindberg, Hamar,
autoriseret Agent.

359

The United States of America,

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING:

Homestead Certificate No. 1363
Application 630

Whereas, there has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a CERTIFICATE of the Register of the Land Office at Alexandria Minnesota, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Carl O. Thorstenson has been established and duly consummated in ... of the North East quarter of Section ... of the North West quarter of Section ... ship One hundred and thir... in the District of Lands subject ... in Minnesota containing One hun...

... Plat of the Survey of the said Land returned to the General Land Office ... NERAL.

... That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the ... Thorstenson ... the tract of Land above described: To Have and to Hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Carl O Thorstenson and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In testimony whereof, I, Ulysses S. Grant, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the

Conclusions

- While Minnesota continued to evolve over the last 150 years, the sequence of events during the 19th century that occupied Minnesota's arable land and exploited its lumber and mineral wealth set the table for what we are today.